

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## A CHARMING FELLOW.

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### CHAPTER IX.

RHODA stood with her hand on the parlour-door for a minute or so. Little Sarah, the servant-maid, who had admitted her into the house, and had left the parlour in order to do so—for all the Maxfield household was held bound to join in these weekly prayer-meetings—told her that the hymn would be over directly. Rhoda felt shy of entering into the midst of the people assembled, and of encountering the questions and expressions of surprise, which her unprecedented absence from the evening's devotions would certainly occasion.

Presently the singing ceased. Rhoda ran as quickly and noiselessly as she could along the passage, and half-way up the stairs. From her post there she heard the neighbours go away, and the street door close heavily behind them. Now she might venture to slip down. Everyone was gone. The house was quite still. She ran into the parlour, and found herself face to face with David Powell.

Her Aunt Betty was piling the hymn-books in their place on the little table where they stood. There was no one else in the room.

"Where's father?" asked Rhoda, hastily. Then she recollected herself, and bade Mr. Powell "good evening." He returned her salutation with his usual gentleness, but with more than his usual gravity.

"Oh!" exclaimed Betty Grimshaw, looking round from the books. "It's you,

is it, Rhoda? Your father is gone with Mr. Gladwish to his house for a bit. They have some business together. He'll be back by supper."

It very seldom happened that Maxfield left his house after dark. Still such a thing had occurred once or twice. Mr. Gladwish, the shoemaker, was a steward of the Methodist society, and Maxfield not unfrequently had occasion to confer with him. Their business this evening was not so pressing but that it might have been deferred. But Maxfield did not choose to give Powell an opportunity of private conversation with himself at that time; he wanted to see his way clearer, before he took the decided step of openly putting himself into opposition with the practice of his brethren, and the advice of the preacher; and he knew Powell well enough to be sure that evasions would not avail with him. Therefore he had gone out, as soon as the prayers were at an end.

"I must see to the supper," said Betty, and bustled off without another word. Nothing would have kept her in Mr. Powell's society but the masterful influence of her brother-in-law. She escaped to her haven of refuge, the kitchen, where the moral atmosphere was not too rarefied for the comfortable breathing of ordinary folks.

David Powell and Rhoda were left alone together. Rhoda made a little half-timid, half-impatient movement of her shoulders. She wished Powell gone, more heartily than she had ever done before in the course of her acquaintance with him.

Powell stood, with his hands clasped and his eyes cast down, in deep meditation.

At length Rhoda took courage to murmur a word or two, about going to take her cloak off. Aunt Betty would be back

presently. If Mr. Powell didn't mind for a minute or two— She was gliding towards the door, when his voice stopped her.

"Tarry a little, Rhoda," said the preacher, looking up at her with his lustrous, earnest eyes. "I have something on my soul to say to you."

Rhoda's eyes fell before his, as they habitually did now. She felt as though he could read her heart; and she had something to hide in it. She did not seat herself, but stood, with one hand on the wooden mantelshelf, looking into the fire. In her other hand she held her straw bonnet by its violet ribbon, and her waving brown hair shone in the firelight.

"What is it, Mr. Powell?" she asked.

She spoke sharply, and her tone smote painfully on her hearer. He did not understand that the sharpness in it was born of fear.

"Rhoda," he began, "my spirit has been much exercised on your behalf."

He paused; but she did not speak, only bent her head a little lower, as she stood leaning in the same attitude.

"Rhoda, I fear your soul is unawakened. You are sweet and gentle, as a dove or a lamb is gentle; but you have not the root of the matter as a Christian hath it. The fabric is built on sand. Fair as it is, a breath may overthrow it. There is but one sure foundation whereon to lay our lives, and yours is not set upon it."

"I—I—try to be good," stammered Rhoda, in whom the consciousness of much truth in what Powell was saying, struggled with something like indignation at being thus reproved, with the sense of a painful shock from this jarring discord coming to close the harmonious impressions of her pleasant day, and with an inarticulate dread of what was yet in store for her. "I say my prayers, and—and I don't think I'm so very wicked, Mr. Powell. No one else thinks I am, but you."

"Oh, Rhoda! Oh my child!" His voice grew tender as sad music, and, as he went on speaking, all trace of diffidence and hesitation fell away, and only the sincere purpose of the man shone in him clear as sunlight. "My heart yearns with compassion over you. Are those the words of a believing and repentant sinner? You 'try!' You 'say your prayers!' You are 'not so wicked!' Rhoda, behold, I have an urgent message for you, which you must hear!"

She started and looked round at him. He read her thought. "No earthly message,

Rhoda, and from no earthly being. Ah, child, the eager look dies out of your eyes! Rhoda, do you ever think how much God loveth us? How much he loveth you, poor perishing little bird, fluttering blindly in the outer darkness of the world!—that darkness which comprehended not the light from the beginning."

Rhoda's tears were now dropping fast. Her lip trembled as she repeated once more, "I try—I do try to be good," with an almost peevish emphasis.

"Nay, Rhoda, I must speak. In His hand all instruments are alike good and serviceable. He has chosen me, even me, to call you to Him. However much you may despise the Messenger, the message is sure, and of unspeakable comfort."

"Oh, Mr. Powell, I don't despise you. Indeed I don't! I know you mean—I know you are good. But I don't think there's any such great harm in going to see a—a young lady who is too ill to go out. I'm sure she is a very good young lady. I'm sure I do try to be good."

That was the sum of Rhoda's eloquence. She held fast by those few words in a helpless way, which was at once piteous and irritating.

"Are you speaking in sincerity from the very bottom of your heart?" asked Powell, with the invincible, patient gentleness which is born of a strong will. "No, Rhoda; you know you are not. There is harm in following our own inclinations, rather than the voice of the spirit within us. There is harm in clinging to works—to anything we can do. There is harm in neglecting the service of our Master to pleasure any human being."

"I did forget that it was prayer-meeting night," admitted Rhoda, more humbly than before. Her natural sweetness of temper was regaining the ascendant, in proportion as her dread of what might be the subject of Powell's reproving admonition decreased. She could bear to be told that it was wrong to visit Minnie Bodkin. She should not like to be told so, and she should refuse to believe it, but she could bear it; and she began to believe that this visit was held to be the head and front of her offending. Powell's next words undeceived her, and startled her back into a paroxysm of mistrust and agitation.

"But it is not of your absence from prayer to-night that I would speak now. You are entangling yourself in a snare. You are laying up stores of sorrow for

yourself and others. You are listening to the sweet voice of temptation, and giving your conscience into the hand of the ungodly to ruin and deface!" He made a little gesture towards the room overhead with his hand, as he said that Rhoda was giving her conscience into the hands of the ungodly.

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Powell. And I—I don't think it's charitable to speak so of a person—of persons that you know nothing of."

She was entirely taken off her guard. Her head felt as if it were whirling round, and the words she uttered seemed to come out of her mouth without her will. Between fear and anger she trembled like a leaf in the wind. She would have fled out of the room, but her strength failed her. Her heart was beating so fast that she could scarcely breathe. Her distress pained Powell to the heart; pained him so much, as to dismay him with a vivid glimpse of the temptation that continually lay in wait for him, to spare her, and soothe her, and cease from his painful probing of her conscience. "Oh, there is a bone of the old man in me yet!" he thought, remorsefully. "Lord, Lord, strengthen me, or I fall!"

"How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?"

The remembrance of the lot he had drawn came into his mind, as an answer to his mental prayer. It was natural that the words should recur to him vividly at that moment, but he accepted their recurrence as an undoubted inspiration from Heaven. The belief in such direct and immediate communications was a vital part of his faith; and to have destroyed it would, in great part, have paralysed the impetuous energy, and quenched the burning enthusiasm, which carried away his hearers, and communicated something of his own exaltation to the most torpid spirits.

He murmured a few words of fervent thanksgiving for the clear leading which had been vouchsafed to him, and without an instant's hesitation addressed the tearful, trembling girl beside him. "Listen to me, Rhoda. If it be good for your soul's sake that I lay bare my heart before you, and suffer sore in the doing of it, shall I shrink? God forbid! By his help I will plentifully declare the thing as it is. I have watched you, and your feelings have not been hid from me. No; nor

your fears, and sorrows, and hopes, and struggles. I have read them all, so plainly, that I must believe the Lord has given me a special insight in your case, that I may call you unto him with power. You are suffering, Rhoda, and sorry; but you have not thrown your burden upon the Lord. You have set up His creature as an idol in your soul, and have bowed down and worshipped it. And you fancy, poor unwary lamb, that such love as yours was never before felt by mortal, and that never did mortal so entirely deserve it! And you say in your heart, 'Lo, this man talks of what he knows not! It is easy for him!' Well—I tell you, Rhoda, that I too have a heart for human love. I have eyes to see what is fair and lovely; and fancies, and desires, and passions. I love—there is a maiden whom I love above all God's creatures. But, by His grace, I have overcome that love, in so far as it perilled the higher love and the higher duty, which I owe to my Father in Heaven. I have wrestled sore, God knoweth. And He hath helped me, as He always will help those who rely, not on their own strength, but on His!"

Rhoda was hurried out of herself, carried away by the rush of his eloquence, in whose powerful spell the mere words bore but a small part. Eyes, voice, and gesture expressed the most absolute, self-forgetting enthusiasm. The contagion of his burning sincerity drew a sincere utterance from his hearer.

"But you talk as if it were a crime! Does anyone call you wicked and godless, because you have human feelings? I never should call you so. And, I believe, we were meant to love."

"To love? Ah, yes, Rhoda! To love for evermore, and in a measure we can but faintly conceive here below. The young maiden I love is still dearer to me than any other human being—it may be that even the angels in Heaven know what it is to love one blessed spirit above the rest—but her soul is more precious to me than her beauty, or her sweet ways, or her happiness on earth. Oh, Rhoda, look upward! Yet a little while, and the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest, and there cometh peace unspeakable. This earthly love is but a fleeting show. Can you say that you connect it with your hope of Heaven and your faith in God? Does he whom you love reverence the things you have been taught to hold sacred? Is he awakened to a sense of

sin? No! no! A thousand times, no! Rhoda, for his sake—for the sake of that darkened soul, if not for your own—yield not to the temptation which makes you untrue in word and deed, and chills your worship, and weighs down the wings of your spirit! Tell this beloved one that, although he were the very life-blood of your heart, yet, if he seek not salvation, you will cast him from you."

Rhoda had sunk down, half-crouching, half-kneeling, with her arms upon a chair, and her face bowed down upon her hands. She was crying bitterly, but silently; but, at the preacher's last words, she moved her shoulders, like one in pain, and uttered a little inarticulate sound.

Powell bent forward, listening eagerly. "I speak not as one without understanding," he said, after an instant's pause. "I plentifully declare the thing as it is, and as I know it. Your love—! Rhoda, your little twinkling flame, compared to the passionate nature in me, is as the faint light of a taper to a raging fire—as a trickling water-brook to the deep, dreadful sea! Child, child, you know not the power of the Lord. His voice has said to my unquiet soul, 'Be still,' and it obeys Him. Shall He not speak peace to your purer, clearer spirit also? Shall He not carry you, as a lamb, in His bosom? Now—it may be even now, as I speak to you, that His angels are about you, moving your heart towards Him. Rhoda, Rhoda, will you grieve those messengers of mercy? Will you turn away from that unspeakable love?"

The girl suddenly lifted her face. It was a tear-stained, wistfully imploring face, and yet it wore a singular expression of timid obstinacy. She was struggling to ward off the impression his words were making on her. She was unwilling, and afraid to yield to it.

But when she looked up and saw his countenance so pale, so earnest, without one trace of anger, or impatience, or any feeling save profoundest pity, and sweetness, and sorrow, her heart melted. The right chord was touched. She could not be moved by compassion for herself, but she was penetrated by sorrow for him.

In an impulse of pitying sympathy she exclaimed, "Oh, don't be so sorry for me, Mr. Powell! I will try! I will do what you say, if—"

The door opened, and her father stood in the room. Rhoda sprang from her

knees, rushed past him, and out at the open door.

"Man, man, what have you done?" cried Powell, wringing his hands. Then he sat down and hid his face.

Jonathan Maxfield stood looking at him with a heavy frown. "We must have no more o' this," he said harshly.

### SOUTH WALES COLLIERS.

It is barely two years since South Wales monopolised a large share of the newspapers, on account of a gigantic strike that took place amongst the ironworkers and colliers of the coal-basin; and it is now the theatre of a still more calamitous dispute, the result being that two hundred thousand people are, directly or indirectly, prevented earning their daily bread. Though public attention was then, as now, keenly directed to that part of the kingdom, and many interesting reports have been furnished by the various special correspondents, it is still comparatively little known, except to those engaged in working its treasures; and there is so much in it that is quaint and characteristic to the lover of nationality, that I have determined to jot down some of my reminiscences during a many years' residence there.

As a rule, the British tourist has overlooked that part of the country with curious persistence, seeing that it contains some scenery of a high order. For a coal-basin, it has been wonderfully little spoilt by mining accessories; and even in places which are essentially of that character, there is a natural wildness which is most enjoyable, and quite lifts South Wales out of comparison with the Black Country, or canny Newcastle.

A few words on its physical features may not be amiss, before I proceed to speak of the people. It is really more like a basin than any other British coalfield, except the Forest of Dean. But even South Wales is not round, like the section of an apple, but rather resembles the shape of a bishop's-thumb pear, the broad or eastern end of which occupies a portion of the shires of Monmouth and Brecon; the middle including nearly the whole of Glamorganshire, and the stalk or narrow end being represented by parts of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The outside of the pear consists of a belt of carboniferous or mountain limestone,



which forms a complete barrier of rugged cliffs between the basin and the fertile valleys of Breconshire. To the south, however, this barrier has a good deal dwindled away, and in some places is overlaid by more recent geological rocks; while in others, as at Swansea Bay, it has been altogether demolished by the sea. The district thus enclosed is about sixty miles in its long axis (from east to west), by twenty miles in its broad one; and by reason of the great height at which most of the population lives, and especially at the large ironworks on the north border, it goes by the generic name of the "Hills." Until within the last few years, during which railways have crept down from the heights and linked themselves with the great inland trunk systems, to live upon "the hills" meant, in the eyes of the outside world, a species of banishment worse than that of the backwoods. Physically speaking, the limestone barriers divide the coal-basin from a country which is utterly unlike it—different in aspect, climate, soil, produce, inhabitants, and social manners. In the valleys we have an agricultural population; charming scenery; pleasant society; handsome residences; and pretty towns—in fact, all the bright side of English country life; but, once the limestone wall is passed, we have, instead, wild mountain moorland; grimy, rough people; severe climate; soil producing little but coal; and society at the lowest ebb. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the dweller in the valleys only troubles the hills with his presence under pressure of important business, and regards his iron neighbours with a certain curiosity, as men of another type.

The chief scenic characteristic is a broad expanse of heather and bog, with little to relieve the outline but an occasional cairn of grey stones, raised to commemorate some Celtic warrior who fell in prehistoric fight. But for all its monotony, there is much to charm the lover of moorland—the peat-stained streamlets wimpling with the faintest of murmurs; the rich green patches of whin and bog-berry plants; the springiness and elasticity of the heather hummocks; and the glorious breeze that blows straight up from the Bristol Channel. It is in this plateau, formed geologically of millstone grit, that the rivers of the coal-basin collect their forces, and make their way to the sea through the most charming of glens or "cwms," all of which have a strong family

likeness—so much so indeed, that I have known ludicrous mistakes to happen, of strangers finding themselves in one valley, while their host's dinner was waiting for them in another, separated by a range of hills some eighteen hundred feet high. So steeply do the mountain sides slope, that there is usually room for nothing but the road and the river, the latter often concealed from view by the overarching boughs of the woods. Indeed, to this day there are spots, within easy walk of populous ironwork towns, which still deserve Archdeacon Cox's description in the last century of "wild solitudes, trodden only by adventurers in search of game." Occasionally we see the chimney of a colliery amongst the trees, but the "cwm" is so well wooded, that it is but a small eyesore. One reason of this is, that the coalseams run in strata along the hill-sides, and can therefore be reached by driving a horizontal gallery, technically called a "level." There is, therefore, no occasion for all the paraphernalia of shafts and pumping-engines, such as are required for the deeper veins of steam coal lower down the valley; for as the coal-beds slope at a certain inclination (called the dip) from the north of the basin towards the south, it follows that the deepest seams are to be found in the middle. Where they first appear on the north crop, the coals are so close to the surface that they can be dug out as from an open quarry, and this mode of extraction is called "patch-work;" but the inclination of the beds speedily carries them out of the reach of the "patch-man," and necessitates, first of all, levels, and then regularly organised collieries.

With most of the coal seams, and particularly on the north crop, are associated veins of ironstone; and this is the reason why we find all the large ironworks, such as Merthyr, Nantyglo, Tredegar, and Ebbw-vale, occupying situations at the heads of the valleys. Coal is worked more cheaply here, from its being so near the surface; the iron ore is, or was, ready to hand from the same source, while the limestone, used as a flux for smelting the ore, is quarried only a few miles off in the barrier of rocks of which I have just spoken. The juxtaposition of these essentials for iron-making is the reason why a district which, one hundred years ago, was barren moorland, without a sign of human life, is now covered with large towns, and plays so important a part in the commercial history

of England. But for years and years these great works were, notwithstanding their growing wealth, as isolated from the rest of the country as though they were in Canada. It is not fifty years ago since iron was carried from Merthyr to Cardiff on the backs of mules, and the opening of the Taff Vale Canal was looked upon as the achievement of the age. Then came tramroads, laid through the valleys to the shipping ports, the load, fortunately for the mules, being down hill. I remember, too, when I first went to reside (for my sins) on the "Hills," that a population of some twenty thousand was dependent for their connection with the outer world upon one coach, and one miserable tram-car, which held about a dozen people. Every second mile or so this vehicle got off the line, and the passengers had to jump out and put their shoulders to the wheel to hoist it on again. The seclusion of so large a population from the rest of manufacturing England had the result of creating a feeling of clanship throughout the "Hills." Workmen seldom went away from the district, and foreign labour seldom came into it. Moreover, the ironmasters, some of whom were the original founders of the works, lived, for the most part, among their people at the "Big House," and maintained a rough, though not unkindly, sway over the population to which they gave employment. But within the last twenty years a great change has taken place. The old tramways have been superseded by railways, which, originally intended for local traffic, have gradually become linked to the Great Western and London and North-Western systems, so that now there is not a valley in the coal-basin which has not its regular telegraphic and railway communication with London, Liverpool, and Manchester.

In consequence of these facilities, the proprietors began to give up residing among their people; while, as time went on, the works themselves fell victims, more or less, to the limited liability mania, and are now chiefly in the hands of shareholders who never see them, or take the least interest in them, except as a medium for dividends. The feeling of the workpeople towards the "Big House" and the "master" has now pretty well died away; and this has been much assisted by the readiness with which the colliers and ironworkers can now migrate to other parts of England, their places being filled by new comers, who have

neither the nationality or the *amor patriæ* to bind them to their employers. Indeed, in the lapse of time, many of the reasons for establishing the works where they are have lapsed also. The iron ore, which was so cheaply and easily worked in former days, has been either extracted altogether, or has become expensive to obtain. Foreign ore is, therefore, largely imported to South Wales—brown ore from Somersetshire, oolitic from Northamptonshire, hematite from Lancashire, specular ore from Elba, Spanish ore from Bilbao and Santander—causing an enormous interchange of traffic, though taking away from the district a considerable item in self-dependence.

The old ironmasters of South Wales were very peculiar men, and deserve a retrospect; for it was to their unbending resolution and stern determination, that the South Wales iron trade owes its existence. Many have gone into the trade since their time, and lost their money over and over again; but these sturdy old iron kings kept their way through good and evil report, and took good and bad times with a dogged equanimity. As a rule, they rose from small beginnings, and were emphatically self-made men. Everybody knows the story of Crawshay, of Cyfartha, and how, as a lad, he rode from Yorkshire to London on his pony; for this is one of the staple stories of encouragement to young beginners. But others, besides Crawshay, did very much the same thing, except that they did not leave quite so much money behind at their deaths; and, though most of them ended their days in grand houses, perhaps as baronets or senators, there were very few who could, by any stretch of imagination, be called gentlemen, or even decently-educated men. Their manners were rough, their speech rougher; and, what with frequently enforcing their orders with a volley of strong language, and sometimes even with a blow, it is hard to say which was the most uncivilised, the master or the man. But, with all this there was often much kind personal feeling, which, when it was shown, lighted upon the recipient with such good result, that it was a pity that this leverage was not more constantly in operation. Even as it was, the influences of unionism fell harmless on the district for years. The Welshman could not see its advantages, and did not believe in it; and, if this feeling had been properly understood and carefully cultivated, the ruinous strike of

1873, and the still more lamentable lock-out of 1875, would, in all probability, never have been heard of.

On the other hand, I am bound to say that the masters, despite a certain amount of rough good nature, were sadly oblivious of the responsibilities imposed upon them, by bringing together such large masses of people. As a rule, they did little towards making them cleanly, healthy, or moral. As far as health was concerned, the pure air of the hills is such that the general mortality was very small as compared with manufacturing towns; and to each work a medical man (paid by the "stoppages" of the people) was allotted. But, beyond this, the sanitary conditions of the iron-works were, and still are, at zero; and most of the towns of the district show a defiance of cleanliness and decency which is a scandal to the Principality. It is true that individual, and sometimes public, endeavours have been made of late years to improve matters; but there are arrears of neglect of physical and social duties which have to be scored down to the account of these old ironmasters, who got so much of the country and gave so little back.

Educational and religious matters fared better than the sanitary ones, for the Welsh are an eminently religious people, or, I should more correctly say, a service-going people; and although the Church of England has striven manfully to grapple with the spiritual destitution, it could do but little compared to the good that was done by the Dissenters. This was but natural, and arose partly from the geographical position of most of the works. In the old days, when the boundaries of our parishes were laid down, enormous areas of desolate mountain land were parcelled off to the nearest church, which was perhaps eight or ten miles distant; for nobody could guess, that tens and hundreds of thousands would ultimately settle down in these lofty regions. But so it was; and when the population did come, the parish church was the last place that the inhabitants ever thought of visiting, even if they knew of such an institution. The churches themselves were evidently not the centres of much ecclesiastical activity, for there is an old document in the Llandaff Cathedral archives, purporting to be a petition from the parishioners of Bedwelty (the parish church of Tredegar Ironworks, and some thirty thousand people), that they might be allowed the

boon of a sermon once a month! It was natural, therefore, that the Dissenters should obtain the mastery of such a district. At all events, if churches are somewhat scanty in the district, there are chapels without end, and in every iron-work town or colliery village we find that Pysgah, Bethel, Calvary, Zion, or Moriah are the fashionable temples. But while admiring the devotion that prompted the erection of these conventicles, of which some twenty or more may be counted in one place, it is sad to record that the greater number of them are in debt. A chapel is easily run up, for the architecture is not generally of a kind that requires much discussion; but the builder seldom gets his money, until after repeated pressure upon the congregation in the shape of tea-parties, lectures, concerts, and Bands of Hope. I believe, however, that the contributions of a congregation are generally large in proportion to their means, and the Welsh minister well knows how to use the lever of public opinion for procuring supplies—in this respect being more fortunate than the Church of England parsons. The service in the church is usually carried on with a certain simplicity, Ritualism having fortunately got but little hold in South Wales, and the clergy, as a rule, being totally unaccustomed to its intricacies. Indeed, a High Church curate of the present day would have stared with astonishment at my old vicar, who, worthy man, paid me an inaugural call, with a good deal of ceremony, and a long clay pipe sticking out of his pocket. Smoke was still proceeding from the bowl, by which I conjectured that he had at that moment knocked the ashes out in deference to conventionality. Certainly the Welsh clergy, who are usually of the Lampeter degree, have been the subjects of very funny stories, most of which, I fancy, have arisen from their want of familiarity with the English language, though their powers of expression in their native tongue are often very great. I was moved to much laughter on one occasion by a quaint little curate, who declared from the reading-desk that "I do publish the banns of marriage between Thomas Williams and William Jones." Finding, however, by the titterings around him that he had done something irregular, he mended the matter by proclaiming the union of William Jones and Thomas Williams, and it was only at the third attempt that he sorted the right couples. I remember, too,

a very comical announcement by the Rev. Jenkin Price, a queer old Welshman, who officiated at a private chapel built by one of the ironmasters. The occasion was a confirmation, and was made public in the following extraordinary terms: "I do give notice, that there will be a confirmashun in this church next Tuesday. No! Tuesday did I say? Well, I did mean Wednesday. The Bishop be coming, and her Laddyship say, you may all come if you like!" Another eccentric old parson in Glamorganshire caused great consternation amongst his congregation by the action that he took about the singing. A psalm was given out, but nobody felt competent to start it, whereupon the vicar gazed irascibly around, and thus addressed a parishioner: "Mr. Churchwarden Matthews, why don't you begin directly, sir?" But Mr. Churchwarden Matthews, having no music in his soul, only looked sheepish, and made no sign. His Reverence forthwith pitched upon an unfortunate stranger, and adjured him thus: "You, sir, you look as if you had a singing face, you begin!" The oddities, however, were not always confined to the parson. I remember an ironmaster, as well known in South Wales as the Bank of England, who, probably with an idea of saving time, always kept his prayer-book cut up in sections, and held together with indiarubber bands, so that he might not spend precious moments in finding his place. The old gentleman was most intolerant of anything being said or done in the service which would lengthen it out by a single moment, and audibly expressed his impatience then and there. For instance, if the clergyman gave out, as was proper, "The fifth Sunday after Trinity—the Collect," a rejoinder would come from the big pew: "The fool! as if we didn't all know that—why can't he get on?"

The ironworkers and colliers, as a rule, prefer the chapels to the churches. In the former they get a more sensational service than in what they consider the cut-and-dried forms of the Church of England, which are a great deal too cold and impersonal for them. The singing in the chapels is hearty and refreshing, and nowhere is the peculiar talent of the Welsh better shown than in their religious music. The world has seen at the Crystal Palace what Welsh singers can do with native training; and this facility of music pervades the whole of the district to a remarkable extent. At Christmas

time, and on state occasions, a choir of thirty to forty will come to your house and sing, without music, for the hour together; not merely plain psalms or glees, but intricate fugues, in which the parts are taken up with wonderful precision. Although their intonation is very defective, there is never a hitch or a false note; while, generally speaking, the lights and shades are carefully attended to. Handel is a great favourite in South Wales; and in passing a row of cottages I have often heard the inmates and their friends hard at work on a chorus of the Messiah. At the Cymrygyddion, or Eisteddfod, the national meetings, at which the Welsh language, poetry, and music are supposed to be especially cultivated, one often sees an amusing rivalry between the various choirs of the district, who feel that the eyes of the world are upon them, and that it is their duty not only to win the prizes, but, what is more important, to keep up their reputation as musicians of the first water. Welsh conceit, which is proverbial, is here seen to the greatest advantage; but I do not know that it differs much from the conceit which is indigenous to all choirs, except that it is more openly expressed. Funerals, too, are occasions when we have some very characteristic singing. It is the custom in the ironworks for a large gathering, principally of women, to follow the corpse to its last home; and I know of few sights more impressive than the long train of five or six hundred people slowly winding up the mountain side, with the waves of the deep-toned hymn rising and falling with the wind. This funeral-going is more particularly considered the proper thing, when the death has resulted from accident in the works; or when, as I have more than once seen, three or four have fallen victims to an underground explosion, the sympathy of the whole district is aroused, and the neighbourhood turns out en masse.

It is singular that, though accidents of the gravest character daily happen, there is no hospital in the whole of the coalfield, except at the seaport towns; and each case, no matter how complicated, has to be attended at the patient's own home. At the works' surgery a vast amount of somewhat rough-and-ready doctoring is carried on; and I remember being infinitely amused, when staying at the doctor's house, to see a row of colliers, squatting on their haunches (the usual "at ease"



attitude of pitmen) waiting to be bled. They had always been accustomed to be bled at a certain time of the year, and although my friend laboured hard to show them the absurdity of the practice, it was all to no good. Bled they would be, and bled they were; and not all the talking of the doctor would convince them of the uselessness of this custom. Another squad was grimly waiting to have their teeth taken out, each man or boy marching up to the chair of torture with a sort of proud consciousness that the eyes of the world were upon him, and that he would be a hero, or despised, according to the measure of his endurance. It was almost as nervous work for the operator as for the patient, as the criticisms on his performance were given without the slightest regard to his feelings, and a quick, steady tooth-drawer gained infinite kudos, and stamped himself in the minds of the bystanders as a man of genius. Half the children in the place came for plaster, which was given without stint to all applicants, although, as the doctor pathetically observed, he knew that most of it went to mend the windows, or as a ready material for lighting fires. Some of the professional conversations were funny enough. "Well, Mrs. Morgan," said the doctor, "how is your boy this morning?" "Well, to be sure, sir, he be not a bit better whatever." "Did you put the mustard-plaster on his chest, as I ordered?" "Well, 'deed to goodness, doctor, I did not then, for the bachkin was afraid; but I did mix the mustard up with a lot of beef, and I did make him eat it, whatever."

A compulsory accident fund is established at most of the works for the benefit of those who are temporarily disabled—a most excellent provision, without which the wives and children would come badly off. The South Welsh workman is not one whit more provident than his fellows in other parts of the kingdom; no matter what are his wages, the chances are that, after being down with a broken leg for a fortnight, he comes upon the parish for aid. People were rather scandalised, during the late high prices for coal, at hearing that colliers drank champagne; but from my experience of the way in which many of them lived, I should say that such instances of extravagance were perfectly credible. I have myself gone into cottages at breakfast time, and found the family making a first-rate meal of coffee, ham and eggs,

and muffins; and I remember also being in a fishmonger's shop at Newport, when my eye lighted on a fine piece of salmon. Not being a collier or a furnaceman, I could not afford such dainties at three shillings a pound; but, before I left the shop, one of these millionaires came in with his son, had the fish weighed, paid his guinea, and carried it off in triumph for his supper! And yet if this Lucullus met with an accident the next week, the chances are that his wife would be clamouring at the door of the relieving-officer. In the days of which I am writing, the truck-shop had a good deal to do with this unhealthy state of things; and even now, although truck is illegal, I fear that the workman is not free from its influence. The company's shop had a great advantage over all others, as the men were paid through its agency, and very frequently paid in kind. Few colliers—or rather few colliers' wives—could stand the temptation of having indefinite supplies without the necessity of present payment; and they never reflected that, as their own money filtered to them through the shopkeeper, he possessed an absolute certainty of paying himself on his own terms. Many men have made large fortunes out of these shops, and are now colliery proprietors on their own account, justices of the peace, and what-not; but I have no hesitation in saying that the "company" shops, as a rule, were hotbeds of extortion and cheating. Here is a sample of the way in which it was done. Tobacco was, and perhaps still is, a frequent circulating medium, like the cowrie-shells of the savages. The workman bought a pound on tick at the shop at a high price; the pound, as I have been credibly informed, having first been divided into five quarters. He would then take the tobacco to the public-house, and exchange it (at a considerable loss) for bad beer. When the publican had accumulated a good stock, he would take it back to the shop, and resell it to the shopkeeper, of course making a second profit; while the workman lost on every point of the transaction. It would be an interesting problem to find out how much money was turned over by the pound of tobacco before it was eventually smoked. I remember being present at a police-court, at which one of the magistrates, who, although he had become a great man, was still interested in the company's shop, fined a petty huckster for short weight.

She paid the fine; but took her revenge by quietly remarking, "'Deed to goodness, Mr. J., that last pound of bacon that I did buy of you was short, too!'"

There is one point in which the South Welsh workmen contrast most favourably with those in other districts, or of other trades—and that is, in the immunity from serious crime. The petty sessions have plenty to do in the way of "drunk and disorderly," small larcenies, assaults, household quarrels, and cases of lovers who have loved "not wisely but too well," but of real premeditated crimes there are very few; and considering the extent and wildness of the district, and the comparatively small body of police that keep order, it speaks volumes for the native love of peace and order. In times of excitement, it is true that there have been serious riots, such as those of Merthyr Tydvil, about fifty years ago, and the Chartist riots of more recent date; but, as a rule, nearly all the Welsh excitement evaporates in talk, and it requires a good deal of continuous prompting to keep up Welsh revenge to high-anger mark. Indeed, the strike of 1873, and I believe also the present one, would have soon ended, if the men had been allowed to have their own way. But this is just what the agitators take care not to let them have; and to those who are unacquainted with the moral cowardice of the British workman in general, and of the South Welsh collier in particular, it would appear a perfect enigma how some half-dozen glib-tongued stump orators, strangers to the country, keep a hold for so many months over a hundred thousand operatives. The latter recognise the folly of it, and yet dare not protest either verbally or actively; and I remember, when paying a visit in 1873 to my old district, meeting a couple of colliers "at play," with Sunday coats on and disconsolate faces. "Well, John Williams," quoth I, "I suppose this is the old story, eh?" "Indeed yes, master," was the answer. "We are the same silly fools that we always were." No doubt many of the men by whose blind obstinacy the present unhappy state of things in South Wales has been brought about, are beginning to take John Williams's view of the case—and will, in all probability, have it put still more forcibly to them, when they have succeeded in ruining the trade of the district beyond recovery, as they seem to be in a fair way of doing.

### CONCERNING THE NOSE.

A YOUNG gentleman of Nuremburg, who had wooed and won, and wanted to wed the fair daughter of a wealthy burgher, deemed it advisable to pop the question to papa by proxy, and found a mutual friend willing to act for him. Knowing the lover's circumstances, that shrewd individual said, ere he went on his mission, "I will give you twenty thousand dollars for your nose, if you will allow me to cut it off!" "Not for the world!" was the reply. As the go-between anticipated, the lady's father raised no objection to her suitor, but simply inquired as to his means. "Well," said the wily ambassador, "he has not any landed property, nor much ready-money at his command, but he possesses a jewel for which, to my knowledge, he has refused twenty thousand dollars." As unsuspecting as an M.P. ambitious of a profitable directorship, the old gentleman closed with the offer of the oily-tongued promoter of matrimony, and found himself saddled with a son-in-law whose nose was his only fortune.

Had the 'cute friend of the fond pair been in earnest, and made his strange bid in the open market, he would hardly have obtained the most insignificant of snubs for his money. No man or woman would willingly part with the most prominent of the features—the one that gives character to the rest, and makes or mars the beauty of the human countenance. Artists generally hold, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, that the Grecian is the only perfect nose, the straight-ridged form being more beautiful than the concave, convex, or any other irregular shape. The author of *Notes on Noses*, on the contrary, awards precedence to the aquiline, royal, or Roman nose, as being a sure indication of an energetic, resolute, ruling mind; and cites in proof the names of Julius Cæsar, Canute, Charles the Fifth, Edward the First, Robert Bruce, Wallace, Columbus, Pizarro, Drake, William the Third, Condé, Loyola, Elizabeth of England, Washington, and Wellington. He tells us that astuteness and craft, refinement of character, and love of art and literature, are the characteristics of Grecian-nosed folks; but we are not aware that Milton, Petrarch, Spenser, Boccaccio, Raffaele, Claude, Rubens, Titian, Murillo, Canova, Addison, Shelley, Erasmus, Voltaire, and Byron were remarkable for craftiness, however truly set down as lovers of literature and

art. Alexander the Great, Constantine, Wolsey, Richelieu, Ximenes, Lorenzo de' Medici, Raleigh, Philip Sidney, and Napoleon, owned hybrid noses, neither Roman nor Grecian, but something between the two. The wide-nostriled nose betokens strong powers of thought and a love for serious meditations; Bacon, Shakespeare, Luther, Wycliffe, Cromwell, Hogarth, Franklin, Johnson, and Galileo being a few of the famous "cogitative-nosed" ones. Vespasian, Correggio, and Adam Smith, odd as the conjunction seems, were men of the same mental type, possessing deep insight into character, and a faculty for turning that insight to profitable account, or their hawk-noses were false physiognomical beacons. Certainly it would be unsafe always to judge of a man by his nose. Suvaroff, for instance, scarcely comes in the category of weak-minded men, although he wore as veritable a snub as James the First, Richard Cromwell, and Kosciusko. Even if there be an art to find the mind's construction in the nose, there are so many mongrel organs about, that it must perforce be one of but limited application, and scarcely more helpful than the advice of the wise man, who, professing to furnish ladies with instructions as to choosing their husbands, says, "I would recommend a nose neither too long nor too short, neither too low nor too high, neither too thick nor too thin, with nostrils neither too wide nor too narrow."

If the beauty of a nose depends upon its shape, its power is regulated by its length, which ought never to be less than one-third of the profile, measured from the roots of the hair to the tip of the chin. Should it exceed that proportion, so much the better; for we are assured that whenever two persons, the one having a large nose and the other a small one, come into collision, the latter must yield, unless it is of the feminine gender and takes a celestial turn; then, perhaps, the little nose may conquer, by possessing impudence alone. Napoleon had a prejudice for long-nosed men, on the ground that their breathing was bold and free, and their brain, lungs, and heart, in consequence, cool and clear. But there are disadvantages attached to an over allowance of nose. Probably Wilson, the painter, did not feel grateful to Nature when street-boys saluted him as Nosey; and the Greek who could not hear his own sneeze, and the Roman who was asked to

place his nose opposite the sun, and open his mouth to expose his tremendous teeth, that he might serve passers-by for a sundial, would both have gladly, had it been possible, shorn the obtrusive organs of their unfair proportions. Such well-provided gentlemen as these would have been qualified for the membership of the Ugly Club, one of the rules of that society running, "If the quantity of any man's nose be eminently miscalculated, whether as to the length or breadth, he shall have a just pretence to be elected." Under a strict interpretation of that clause, to a man with no nose at all a seat among the uglies would have been as unattainable as the chair of the Doge of Venice. Perhaps it was a knowledge of this that impelled an eccentric gentleman to invite every noseless man he met in the street to dine at a Covent Garden tavern, upon a certain day. When the strange company assembled for the first time, they gazed at each other in silent wonder; until one of them, glancing at the well-spread table, observed that, though there was not a nose in the room, every one present had a mouth, which, under the circumstances, seemed to be the more useful of the two. Upon this the company proceeded to discuss the good cheer provided, subject to but one condition, that any gentleman putting his nose into his glass forfeited a quart of wine. Once every month did this odd society meet, at the expense of their benevolent entertainer; but it was not destined to exist long. Ere the No Nose Club had enjoyed a year of life, the founder died, and the club with him.

It was said of old, it is not given to every one to have a nose. If our eyes did not teach us the contrary, we should be justified in believing that Nature, after trying her prentice hand on man, discovered noses were inelegant superfluities, and so, when making the lasses, gave them none at all. Although

Noses are always touched when lips are kissing,  
And who would care to kiss where nose was missing?

Cupid has ever ignored the existence of a feminine nose. A smooth brow, a rosy cheek, a coral lip, a swan-like neck, a bright eye, a white hand, a taper waist, a neat foot, a dainty ankle; each has sufficed alone to ensnare the heart of man; but where is he who will own himself captivated by a nose? An old writer upon the etiquette of courtship instructs the would-be wooer that he must

assure the lady he would win, that her brow is a smooth milky galaxia, wherein Love sitteth in triumph to discharge his artillery; that her tresses are golden ensigns of love; her eyes, loadstones of affection, shedding a firmament of light; her lips, an altar where the heart is offered for sacrifice; and liken her cheeks to Punic apples, and her voice to the western wind gladdening Arabian shores. But he has not one compliment to spare for the nose; that is left out in the cold, as if to remind a lady she possessed such a feature were an offence as deep a dye as to remember that a Queen of Spain had legs. One lover boasted of having indited a hundred sonnets to his mistress's eyebrows; another wrote a long string of verses upon a hair from his lady-love's eyelash; but, with the exception of the enthusiastic author of the lines—

I know a nose, a nose no other knows,  
'Neath starry eyes, o'er ruby lips it grows,  
Beauty is in its form and in its blows!

never did lover honour his sweetheart's nasal organ with so much as a couplet. Poets, too, give the go-by to that necessary appendage to a beautiful face. Dudu's Phidian organ; Lynette's, "tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;" and Rosial's, "directed straight even as line," are the only noses belonging to poetic heroines we can call to mind. It is true the learned author of *The Marriage of the Arts* says of one of the ladies in his play—

Her nose, Phalenceake-like, in comely sort,  
Ends in a trochii, or a long and short;

but then Holyday was not a poet; only a pedant, whose dulness disgusted his pedant sovereign, for it is recorded—

At Christ Church Marriage, done before the king;  
Lest that those mates should want an offering,  
The king himself did offer—what, I pray?  
He offered twice or thrice—to go away.

The Lady Olivia, giving the false Cesario an inventory of her charms, enumerates two lips indifferent red, two grey eyes with lids, a neck, and a chin; but contemptuously includes her nose in an "and so forth." This feature is the only one the sex leaves to itself, neither attempting to improve it or to set it off with ornaments. The dark-eyed damsels of ancient Israel indeed wore jewels in their noses; but, as a rule, the ladies have declined to decorate them.

When a lady on her face  
Sticking-plaster used to place,  
As an ornament and grace,

she never wasted a solitary patch upon her

nose; and those women of the period who, in the hope of making themselves beautiful for an evening, if not for ever, do not hesitate at loading their heads with more hair than Nature has licensed them to carry, while pencilling their eyebrows, giving artificial lustre to their eyes, and artificial lilies and roses to their cheeks, leave their noses untouched by art, and throw no half-guineas away on machines warranted to convert the most ill-shaped of noses into absolute perfection.

Men feel towards their noses much as Verbruggen the actor did towards his pretty wife, for whom he cared nothing, although prompt to resent any affront offered to her. An insult to his nose, consequent upon his telling his princely master to pull off his boots for him, drove De Comines from Burgundy to France, to revenge the unforgotten injury years afterwards by pillorying his first patron in his Memoirs. Many a man has had the satisfaction of being shot for pulling another's nose, or for having his own served the same way, that being at one time, and not so very long ago, the approved manner of insulting a man. A correspondent of the *Spectator*, praying for a redress of the grievance, writes: "I do not wear a sword, but I often divert myself at the theatre, where I frequently see a set of fellows pull plain people by the nose. I was in the pit the other night when it was very much crowded. A gentleman leaning upon me very heavily, I, very civilly, requested him to remove his hand, for which he pulled me by the nose. I would not resent it in so public a place, because I was unwilling to create a disturbance; but I have since reflected upon it as a thing that is unmanly and disgenerous, renders the nose-puller odious, and makes the person pulled by the nose look little and contemptible."

Nose-wringing was bad enough, but nose-slitting was something a great deal worse. Pepys's patron, Sir William Coventry, hearing that Killigrew purposed bringing him upon the stage, gave that incorrigible joker warning that, if he dared to do so, or if any of his actors offered anything like a representation of him, he should not trouble himself to complain to the Lord Chamberlain, nor content himself, as Sir Charles Sedley had done, with getting him a beating, but would cause his nose to be slit. Strangely enough, some nine months afterwards, Sir William's nephew, Sir John Coventry, while on his



way home from the tavern at which he usually supped, was waylaid near Suffolk-street by twenty of His Majesty's guards, commanded by Sir Thomas Sands, and the son of the Earl of Inchiquin. Snatching a flambeau from his servant's hand, Sir John drew his sword, and placing his back to the wall, fought against odds like a brave gentleman. He succeeded in disabling O'Brien and one or two more of the military gang; but, at last, losing his weapons, he was thrown to the ground, and there left by his cowardly assailants, but not till they had cut his nose to the bone. This outrage was Charles the Second's revenge upon Sir John for having asked, when the Court party in the House of Commons opposed a playhouse tax, on the ground that the players were the king's servants, and part of his pleasure, whether the king's pleasure lay among the men or women that acted? The deed was worthy of the monarch who instigated it; and Marvel celebrated the attacking of one man by a troop of horse in the lines—

While the King of France, with powerful arms,  
Gives all his neighbours strange alarms;  
We, in our glorious bacchanals, dispose  
The humbler fate of a plebeian nose.  
'Tis this must make O'Brien great in story,  
And add more beams to Sands's former glory.

The immediate results of the scandalous business was the passing of the so-called "Coventry Act," banishing the principals in the affair, and declaring them incapable of receiving the royal pardon; while ordering that henceforth the cutting, maiming, or disfiguring of any man should be counted felony, without benefit of clergy, and punished with death. The Mobocks seem to have forgotten the existence of this law, or, if they remembered it, set it at defiance with impunity. It remained on the statute-book until 1828, when it was repealed, without any adequate punishment being provided for offences of the sort; so that, even now, one cannot take up a newspaper without being taught that, in the eye of the law, the maiming and disfiguring of man or woman is a venial offence, compared to the snatching of a till or the picking of a pocket.

The nose can boast one prerogative entirely its own—that of bringing a blessing upon its owner's head. How it comes by this honourable distinction is a mystery, none the easier of solution by reason of the custom of blessing a sneezer being pretty well universal. According to one tradition, the practice arose in the pontifi-

cate of Gregory the Great, when Rome was scourged by a plague peculiar for instant death following upon a sneeze, "whereof it grew into a custom that they who were present when any man sneezed should say, 'God bless you!'" This story must have been a pious invention to disguise the heathenish origin of the odd custom, which was familiar to Romans long before they had any acquaintance with Popes. They, in all likelihood, merely imitated the Greeks. Ross, taking the cue from Aristotle, says the Greeks worshipped the head in stertutation, as being a divine part, the seat of the senses and cogitation. He assures us "Prometheus was the first that wished well to the sneezer, when the man, which he had made of clay, fell into a fit of stertutation upon the approach of that celestial fire which he stole from the sun." But if the rabbins are to be believed, sneezing heralded death rather than life; for they taught that men in the old, old days only sneezed once in their lives, and then died of the shock to the system; until Jacob, by his prayers, obtained a more merciful dispensation, conditionally upon the act of sneezing being followed with a "God bless you!" whereupon all the princes of the earth commended their subjects to let a benediction ever wait upon a sneeze.

Ancient Hindu etiquette prescribed an interchange of blessings. Mr. Childers, in *Notes and Queries*, thus translates a passage in the Buddhist Scriptures:—"One day, Buddha, while seated in the midst of a large congregation of disciples, to whom he was preaching the law, chanced to sneeze. Thereupon the priests exclaiming, May the Blessed Lord live! May the Welcome One live! made a loud noise, and seriously interrupted the discourse. Accordingly, Buddha addressed them as follows: Tell me, priests, when a person sneezes, if the bystanders say, May you live, will he live the longer or die the sooner for it? Certainly not, Lord. Then, priests, if any one sneezes you are not to say to him, May you live; and if any of you shall say it, let him be guilty of a transgression. From that time forth, when the priests sneezed, and the bystanders exclaimed, May you live, sirs; the priests, fearful of transgressing, held their peace. People took offence at this. What, said they, do these priestly sons of Sakya mean by not uttering a word when we say, May you live, sirs? The matter came to Buddha's ears. Priests, said he, the laymen are the corner-

stone of the church; when laymen say, May you live, sirs! I give my sanction to your replying, Long life to you! Buddha was not disposed to lose disciples by running counter to their superstition; so the believing Hindu still looks upon a sneeze as something portentous, and will pause in his devotions if he chances to sneeze, and after touching his forehead, nose, chin, and cheeks with the tips of his fingers, begin his prayers again. In the land of the Caciques, sneezers used to be saluted with, May the sun guard you! May the sun protect you! and wherever the custom prevailed the formula observed was almost identical, and plainly originated in some fancied connection of sneezing and death."

Superstition never yet was consistent. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Greeks welcomed a sneeze as a lucky omen when it made itself heard between midnight and morn; and the Romans hailed one with joy, provided it was a sneeze to the right. But if the notions of some good folks be correct, a sneeze in any direction ought to be acceptable, since it proves the sneezer is in full possession of his wits, for no idiot can, they say, sneeze under any provocation. If it be so, it is well, for an idiot might take the old writer to be serious who advises—

When you would sneeze, straight turn yourself unto  
your neighbour's face,  
As for my part, wherein to sneeze, I know no fitter  
place;  
It is an order, when you sneeze good men will pray  
for you;  
Mark him that doth so, for I think he is your friend  
most true.  
And that your friend may know who sneezes, and  
may for you pray,  
Be sure you not forget to sneeze fall in his face  
away.  
But when thou hearest another sneeze, although he  
be thy father,  
Say not, God bless him; but choak up, or some  
such matter rather.

### CURIOUS OLD CHINA.

#### IN THREE PARTS. PART III.

A PROFOUND study of the history of Oriental porcelain induces the conviction that we are indebted to China itself for the mania for collecting crockery. Before porcelain was either made or collected in Europe, immense sums were paid by Chinese connoisseurs for choice specimens of ancient make. It may be premised that the manufacture of porcelain in China consists of two branches—the production of new varieties of form and colour, and the imitation of the ancient

porcelains of the empire. The latter is one of the results of minute subdivision of labour—of one man being employed to paint a tree, another a flower, a third a dragon, and so on. The imitation system is in itself ancient. The Mongolian dynasty imitated the wares of the Song, the Ming those of the Mongolian and preceding dynasties, and their porcelain was in its turn reproduced by their successors. Veritable ancient porcelain is so highly esteemed by the Chinese, that fine specimens have been reshipped in England for sale in China, where they fetch higher prices than they have, until just recently, fetched here. It is recorded that the Princess de Vaudemont sold her valuable collection of curious porcelain to a china merchant, who restored the choice pieces to their native country, at a profit of some two or three hundred per cent. Other porcelain than that originally made in China is now exported to that grateful country by western barbarians. A certain variety called *Céladon* was and is highly prized by the Celestials. Its peculiarity consists in the colours being mixed with the glaze and burnt in at the first firing. The term *Céladon* was originally applied to the soft sea-green colour upon pieces of old Oriental porcelain, which command a very high price; and, in the case of the now fashionable colour for silks and cashmeres, retains its meaning as denoting a colour only; but in France it has been extended to all porcelain of whatever colour manufactured in the manner described above. Strictly speaking, *Céladon* is a proper name borne by the gloomy shepherd in the old romance of *Astrée*. By the caprice of the ladies of the court, the name of the lugubrious *Céladon* was attached to the sea-green colour which then, as now, was greatly in fashion. Old sea-green—the original *Céladon*—is very rare and of great antiquity. The Chinese believe it to be at least a thousand years old, and pay for it in proportion, "in which connection" I may cite a curious instance of the operation of the laws of supply and demand. Mr. Fortune, an English scientific author and a well-known collector of real china—who sold off his collections in 1857, 1859, and 1860—formed them in China itself. The sales mentioned created the greatest excitement among both collectors and manufacturers, as presenting examples of colour and glaze remarkable for their beauty and brilliancy—the art of producing which has long since been lost, even in China itself.

Considering that the revival of taste in favour of Chinese porcelain had not then set in, the prices realised were handsome, so great was the confidence felt in the authenticity of specimens which had passed through Mr. Fortune's hands. Nevertheless, this skilled expert was deceived as to the genuineness of some of his acquisitions; certain Céladon bottles manufactured in France for the Chinese market, and which had found their way into the interior, being included in his collection.

Mr. Fortune gives a highly interesting account of his visit to a native china-maniac, who led him from room to room, and pointed out a collection which was enough to make one's "mouth water!" "He showed me many exquisite bits of crackle of various colours—grey, red, turquoise, cream, pale yellow, and, indeed, of almost every shade. One vase I admired much was about two feet high, of a deep blue colour, and covered with figures and ornaments in gold; another of the same height, white ground, with figures and trees in black, yellow, and green—rare and bright colours lost now to Chinese art, and never known in any other part of the world. Taking the collection as a whole, it was the finest I had ever seen, and was a real treat to me. While the Chinese are indifferent about the ancient works of art of foreign countries, they are passionately fond of their own. And well they may be, for not only are many of their ancient vases exquisite specimens of art, but they are also samples of an art which appears to have long passed from among them. All my researches tended to show that the art had been lost; and indeed it must be so, otherwise the high prices which these beautiful things command would be sure, in a country like China, to produce them."

At Peking, Mr. Fortune found the street Loo-le-chang a sort of compound of Paternoster-row, Wardour-street, and Hanway-yard. Here "the greater part of the porcelain is of the Kien-lung period, and although not ancient, is very far superior to the porcelain made in China at the present day. According to the Chinese, that emperor was a great patron of the arts, and tried to copy and imitate the production of the ancients. But the beautiful productions of his reign are yet far inferior to those manufactured during the dynasty of the Mings. The wonderful and lovely colours in turquoise, ruby, apple green, and red found in the ancient specimens are still

unrivalled by anything which has been produced in more modern times, either in China or among the civilised nations of the West." While Mr. Fortune was in the state of ecstasy indicated, an old man called his attention to some beautiful samples, "which it was impossible for a lover of Oriental porcelain to resist; and although he asked high prices for them, I was obliged to submit." Happy victim! kissing the rod wielded unmercifully by the "old soldier" of Loo-le-chang!

For many long centuries the only pieces of Oriental porcelain which reached Europe were brought by the Crusaders, or by way of Venice; but very little of this was real china, the larger quantity being Persian. The doubling of the Cape of Good Hope, however, speedily introduced Chinese and Japanese ware to European markets. First the Portuguese, and afterwards the Dutch, imported large quantities. So early as 1506, Oriental porcelain reached England. In that year, Philip of Austria and Joan, who had taken the title of King and Queen of Castile, were driven into Weymouth by a storm, and were hospitably entertained by Sir Thomas Trenchard. On taking leave, the king presented his host with some immense delft-ware dishes and some bowls of Oriental china, one of which was enclosed in massive silver-gilt of moresque pattern. These famous cups are now in the possession of Mr. J. B. Trenchard, and are said by Marryat to be of blue and white Nankin. Another curious old specimen is Archbishop Warham's drinking-bowl of the pale sea-green thick ware, mounted in silver gilt, and preserved at New College, Oxford. Her glorious majesty Queen Elizabeth received many presents of porcelain, most of which were acquired by her subjects as incidentals in the plunder of Spanish and Portuguese ships. The famous Cavendish was conspicuous among those who presented porcelain to the queen. Early in the seventeenth century, England did a trade in porcelain, and in 1631 a proclamation was issued to restrain the excess of the private trading carried on by the officers and sailors of the East India Company, containing a catalogue of the wares and merchandise allowed to be imported, among which are china dishes and "purslanes" of all sorts.

About the date of the Revolution, a mania for china-collecting spread from Holland to Saxony and England. Frederick Augustus the First, Elector of Saxony

from 1694 to 1733, fostered the ceramic art in his own country, by making the immense collection of Oriental vases in the celebrated Japan palace at Dresden. This building was purchased in 1717, and a large part of its contents was obtained from Holland. Between Frederick William the First of Prussia, and the Physically Strong Augustus, a curious interchange of courtesies took place. The Prussian contributed twenty-two large vases, in return for which the Elector made over to him his finest regiment of dragoons—or at about the rate of twenty men per china vase.

The Dresden collection of Oriental porcelain occupies thirteen rooms. The first room contains the famous old red unglazed ware of Japan, with raised patterns in white, red, and black, and richly gilded. In the blue gallery are forty-seven vases, five feet high, of every shade of the purest blue, and others of buff and brown. The Japan rooms contain eighty-two large vases, with white grounds, and green, black, red, or blue ornaments, and also models of ships, cats, and monsters of every degree of benevolent hideousness. There is, moreover, a wondrous collection of crackle porcelain, and the famous old sea green. Every variety of colour is here represented, and among the rarest of the rare are three fine pieces of the Imperial china—made for the Brother of the Sun and Moon alone. These consist of a bowl of citron-yellow ground, with black dragons and rim, and two flat canary-yellow bowls with impressed patterns. The white ware room contains a large collection of figures, odd and monstrous; and there is also a service executed in china, by the order of Charles the Fifth, for Prince Maurice of Saxony, who was his ally from 1536 to 1541, and many dessert and tea sets made by order of Augustus the Second.

In England, the taste for collecting porcelain made rapid progress. Serious Mr. John Evelyn speaks lovingly of "porselan," and refers to the great collection at the king's house at Kensington. Equally serious, but not equally gentle, Macaulay demolishes handsome Mary and her pretty china in his usual sledgehammer style:—"Mary had acquired at the Hague a taste for the porcelain of China, and amused herself by forming at Hampton a vast collection of hideous images, and of vases on which houses, trees, bridges, and mandarins were depicted in outrageous

defiance of all the laws of perspective. The fashion—a frivolous and inelegant fashion it must be owned—which was thus set by the amiable queen, spread fast and wide. In a few years almost every great house in the kingdom possessed a museum of these grotesque baubles. Even statesmen and generals were not ashamed to be judges of teapots and dragons; and satirists long continued to repeat that a fine lady valued her mottled green pottery quite as much as she valued her monkey, and much more than she valued her husband."

The stern Puritan is full heavy handed to deal with eggshell china, and possessing besides the great advantage of knowing nothing either of porcelain, or of the mysterious ky-lins, and other sacred beasts depicted thereon, pounds away remorselessly. It is amusing to contrast, with the passage just quoted, the language of that Spectator whom Macaulay never tired of praising, and whose "light hand" would have been upon occasion invaluable to him. Macaulay is a true bull in a china shop—smashes everything right and left: the Spectator daintily treads a minuet among the teacups. "Every room in my house is furnished with trophies of her (his wife's) eloquence—rich cabinets, piles of china, japan screens and costly jars; and if you were to come into my parlour, you would fancy yourself in an India warehouse. Besides this, she keeps a squirrel, and I am doubly taxed to pay for the china he breaks."

In another paper, Addison says that no mansion, possessing the least claim to fashion or even to superiority, was considered furnished without a vast accumulation of "loves of monsters;" and, in the Lover, he writes: "There is no inclination in woman that more surprises me than this passion for china. When a woman is visited with it, it generally takes possession of her for life. China vessels are playthings for women of all ages. An old lady of fourscore shall be as busy in cleaning an Indian mandarin as her great-granddaughter is in dressing her baby." At a later date the Lounger, speaking of a lady afflicted with chinamania, says that in her china-room "were piles of plates and dishes, and pyramids of cups and saucers, reaching from the floor to the ceiling. In one quarter was a rampart of tureens and soup-dishes; in another, an embellishment of punch-bowls, candle-cups, and porringers. The dark blue of



Nankeen was contrasted with the ancient red of Japan; the production of Dresden was opposed to the manufacture of Sèvres, and the Mock-Saxon of Derby to the Mock-Indian of Staffordshire. In the ornamental porcelain, the eye was completely lost in a chaos of pagodas, wagging-headed mandarins, and bronzes, red lions, golden dogs, and fiery dragons."

Horace Walpole, of whom it was written—

China's the passion of his soul;  
A cup, a plate, a dish, a bowl,  
Can kindle wishes in his breast,  
Inflame with joy, or break his rest—

tells a capital story against mere curiosity-hunters. It refers to a man named Turner, a great chinaman, who had a jar cracked by the shock of an earthquake. The price of the jars (a pair) was originally ten guineas; but, after the accident, he asked twenty for one of them, because it was the only jar in Europe that had been cracked by an earthquake.

While Walpole was forming his collection at Strawberry-hill, he inspired the famous Mr. Beckford with a noble ambition to do likewise; and the result was the magnificent collection at Fonthill, where, it was said, was a breakfast service of china for every day in the year. Sir Joseph Banks, also, possessed a fine collection of Oriental porcelain; and it is somewhat remarkable that, since the dispersion of the splendid collection formed by Queen Charlotte, the greatest collectors of pottery and porcelain have been of the sterner and clumsier sex—Bernal, Soulages, Soltykoff, Sauvageot, Fountaine, Fortune, Drury Fortnum, the late Marquis of Hertford, King George the Fourth, Beresford Hope, H. G. Bohn, Jacquemart, and Barbet de Jouy.

About the middle of the last century the price of real china was very high; but, as attention was withdrawn from Oriental to European porcelain, the price of the former underwent a sensible diminution. At the famous sale at Strawberry-hill, in 1842, superb specimens of Oriental porcelain were sold at prices which, read by the light of 1875, appear incredibly low. Two small vases, of old sea-green, sold for twenty-two pounds; a pair of dark-blue beakers and covers, richly decorated with flowers in relief of same colour, forty-two inches high, went for fifty-seven pounds; and a curious old white Oriental teapot was actually knocked down for two pounds. At the sale of the Beckford col-

lection better prices were secured, although not half so high as those of the present day. The ruby backed plates, which fetched three or four guineas each, realised considerably more at the Bernal sale a few years later. Indeed, from this famous sale may be dated the revival of chinamania as an epidemic. Early in this century there were collectors, and very great collectors, but they were few and far between, and prices were comparatively low; but, so soon as nations bought crockery, every private person wanted some, and the fancy laughed at a hundred years ago recurred with increased virulence. Immense prices are now given for choice specimens. In 1850 and 1860, one bottle of elegant form, of imperial yellow ground, fetched ninety-five guineas; two pairs of jars fetched, respectively, four hundred and fifty and four hundred and eighty-five guineas; a pair of vases brought six hundred and forty guineas; and one egg-shell plate, with a ruby back, was knocked down for twenty-five pounds! At the sale at Ferol, in March, 1863, a diminutive ovoid urn, about eight inches in height, the brim swollen out in a thick cushiony edge, entirely enamelled in green camellia leaves, with large crackles, fetched forty-eight pounds four shillings. It is now part of the collection of M. Barbet de Jouy, and would fetch, saith M. Burty, double the money. More recently, a carp and its carplings, enamelled in intense violet, sold for one hundred and twenty pounds; and the prices realised at the Dalhousie and other sales strengthen the belief, that the rage for Oriental porcelain is increasing every day.

Abandoning, as utterly hopeless, any attempt to describe the work of the various provincial factories in China, I will endeavour to distinguish the species of real porcelain deemed most worthy of honour.

Passing over, then, the ancient blue, green, and white, and that famous shade of blue said to represent the blue of Heaven as it appears between the clouds after rain; the famous blue crackle with veins like the roe of fishes; that with veins like the claw of a crab, and other celebrated kinds; I may proceed to say at once that the finest period of Chinese porcelain was that of the Song, Mongolian, and Ming dynasties, extending from A.D. 960 to 1647. During this period, and for some centuries before and after it, an imperial manufactory existed at King-te-chin. In the earlier part of this period the porcelain was of a

pale blue or rice colour, moon-white, and deep green. Violet and white china was produced anterior to the fourteenth century, when the white and blue style (of which our old friend the willow pattern is an example) to a great extent supplanted all others. Now came (1368) the great dynasty of Ming, under which were produced many of the treasures most highly prized by Chinese antiquaries. Between 1426 and 1435 was produced the finest porcelain of the Ming dynasty, every production being of the highest artistic value. Later on, egg-shell china, thin as paper, was made, and foreign cobalt was at last introduced into China. The fine blue used at an earlier date—possibly arsenite of cobalt—had been lost, and the importation of cobalt was hailed with delight. Nevertheless, the Chinese still use a native pigment—perhaps silicate of cobalt—besides the pure cobalt, which they now derive from England. Simply referring to the ingenious arrangement (by Messrs. Jacquemart and Le Blant) of Chinese porcelain into groups, it may be well to make a few remarks upon the so-called “monsters” which occupy so large a space in Oriental decoration. These “monsters” are, in fact, sacred animals. To begin with, there is the dragon, of which are many species—the dragon of the heavens, the dragon of the mountains, the dragon of the sea, dragons with or without scales, wings, and horns. A five-clawed dragon is the dynastic symbol of the emperor and princes of the first and second class, and figures upon the imperial standard; that with four claws belongs to princes of the third and fourth rank. The mandarins have a serpent with four claws. Next in importance to the dragon comes the Ky-lin—a creature known in Europe only as a “grotesque,” or as a “monster.” His appearance is frightful; he is covered with scales, is spiky as to his back, but is so gentle a creature that he swerves in his fleetest course to avoid touching a worm, and is of excellent omen. Hence we meet him everywhere, especially as a statuette perched on the top of a vase. Another curious but intensely sacred creature is the dog Fo; the sacred horse is another odd beast, but not wilder in his aspect than the immortal bird Foang-hoang—a very sprawly celestial peacock.

An ancient kind of porcelain is the white, which is also most beautiful from the purity of its paste, its whiteness of enamel, and brilliancy of polish. There are two varieties of this, the pure white and the

bluish white. Much of this was exquisitely thin, and its beautiful translucency was taken advantage of for a species of decoration, the art of producing which is now lost. On the pure white vessel being filled with liquid, blue fishes and other animals became visible, which were absolutely imperceptible when it was empty. This effect was produced by enclosing the coloured figures between two thin laminae of porcelain paste, and reducing the thickness of the outer side as much as possible before the varnish was applied. Perhaps the most beautiful of all Chinese colours is the turquoise blue, the original of the same colour in Sèvres. It is totally distinct from sky-blue, which is derived from cobalt, while turquoise is obtained from copper, and retains its hue in an artificial light. An equally pure and brilliant colour is the violet obtained from oxide of manganese. The old violet is even more rare than the turquoise blue. Both are prepared in the same manner, the Chinese placing the enamel on the pieces in the state of biscuit. Specimens of these colours are eagerly sought after. I have before referred to the price paid for a violet carp, and it is recorded that a violet cat belonging to Madame de Mazarin was sold for an incredible sum.

The ancient crackle vases date from the Song dynasty, and are highly prized both in China and Japan. In the latter country, three hundred pounds is not considered too much to pay for a single specimen. The colours are white, grey, green, brown, yellow, crimson, and turquoise: the last is considered the rarest, but those of a rice colour and pale blue appear to be the most ancient. Sometimes two or three colours are blended together, so as to resemble marble or agate in its veining and colouring. All these varieties have resulted from the keen attention of workmen, desirous to profit by any slight accident. “Observe,” says M. Burty, “the cracks running over some of these vases, like the meshes of a fisherman’s net, in parts marked delicately as the back of a trout, and again regularly as the channel lines of a honey cake. This must necessarily spring from a want of homogeneity in the body, and the glaze covering the so-called Céladon vases; the unequal contraction of the body and the glaze causing the surface coating to split with a thousand little lines. The veined or mottled colours are caused by jets of heat—for the atmosphere of the kiln is so

incandescent that we cannot talk of flame—which attack certain portions of the coating of the piece, and by this greater degree of heat modify the tone or colour of the mineral element with which it is decorated.”

The blue and white porcelain commonly called Nankin, is held in great esteem in the East, but is not sufficiently rare to command high prices in Europe. More esteemed are the enamelled porcelain, covered with the most brilliant colours, profusely and richly decorated with flowers, principally the peony and the chrysanthemum; the beautiful green and rose; the charming ruby ware; and last, but not least, the citron-yellow ware. Made for the exclusive use of the emperor, the citron-yellow is excessively rare. The colour is striking, from its exquisite brilliancy and purity; the paste is the daintiest eggshell. Mr. Marryat declares that he “has met with genuine specimens in only two collections—viz., in the Japan palace at Dresden, and at the late Mr. Beckford’s. Those of the latter sold for their weight in gold. A quantity of spurious specimens of this ware has been made at Canton, which place being far from the imperial observation, and its products chiefly exported, they escaped detection. Of this description were the yellow specimens in the collection of H.R.H. the late Duke of Sussex.”

Supposed to be an offset of the Chinese manufacture, the porcelain of Japan has yet a distinct character of its own. Between the China and Japan workmen yawns the great gulf between routine and individuality. One is a production upon which innumerable hands have left traces of their skill, the other a distinct creation, stamped with a peculiar talent. In the inexhaustible variety, and deliciously eccentric beauty, of their designs, Japanese artists excel all others. Abhorring geometrical regularity of design, instead of planting his big bird in the centre of a plate, like a tavern sign, the Japanese flings him down haphazard, straggling from the rim into the middle, but always with a charming and novel effect. This is the explanation of the real value of this style of decoration. It never wearies, never palls upon the taste, like the hideous regularity of the West.

Great efforts have been made in Europe to imitate Japanese ware, in the first place with the simple object of passing it off as original. The pieces were made wholesale

in Paris, and forwarded to Havre, where vessels touching on their way home from the Indian seas took them and unshipped them in Holland, whence, guaranteed authentic, they were sent to Paris and sold as Oriental porcelain. The imitation ware is far from approaching the excellence of the original, but there is enough of it in circulation to justify the extreme caution of collectors. There is also another kind of Japanese ware manufactured to order by the gross. This, of course, is of no artistic value, and will bear no comparison with the beautiful, cunningly-careless productions of the Japanese artist, whose colours and figures appear as if they had fallen upon his porcelain by accident.

In conclusion, I can only remark to young collectors, that they should adopt an exactly opposite line of conduct to that counselled by Danton. In the place of “Audacity, audacity, always audacity,” they should, when they see a tempting piece marked “imperial yellow,” “old sea-green,” or “old Japan,” softly murmur, “Caution, caution, always caution.”

## A SILENT WITNESS.

BY EDMUND YATES.

AUTHOR OF “BLACK SHEEP,” “CASTAWAY,” “THE YELLOW FLAG,” &c. &c.

BOOK III. CHAPTER V. A CASE FOR THE ACCIDENT WARD.

TWELVE months had passed away since Grace Middleham had received that farewell letter from Anne Studley which had caused so much sorrow both to the writer and the recipient; twelve months during which certain events, not without importance to the principal actors in our little drama, had occurred. The King of Terrors had appeared upon the scene and quietly removed one of them. After Anne’s departure, the good old Frau Professorin, growing daily weaker and weaker, and no longer sustained by the real solicitude and sympathy which her English attendant had bestowed upon her, had gradually sunk to her rest, and left a kindly-mourned and oft-named blank amongst the æsthetic tea circles and the knitting coteries of the dear old German town. The worthy professor grieved much and honestly over his wife’s death; the fractiousness and irritability of her latter days were forgotten, and he only thought of her as in the time when she held to him with loyal devotion, and refused to give way to the pressure brought to bear upon

her by those who deprecated the idea of her alliance with a foreigner, and, above all, with a foreigner who had only his brains to look to as a means of subsistence. The old man felt that, so far as the exercise of his profession was concerned, his life was at an end; he had no heart for the preparation of his lectures, and the society of his comrades of bygone years could not compensate him for the blank desolation of his home. If his niece had remained with him it might have been well enough, for, almost unconsciously, she had wound herself round his large and trusting heart, and there was no one now left to him in the world for whom he had such affection; but the dreariness of the daily routine in the Poppelsdorfer Allee, scarcely supportable while Madame Sturm lived, became insufferable after her death; and, so soon as it was possible, Grace carried out the intention which her aunt's illness alone had induced her to postpone, and took up her abode in England. Before parting with her uncle, with a prevision of the state into which he would probably fall when left to himself, Grace had told the professor that, though she could no longer remain with him in Germany, it was her earnest wish that their lives should not be divided, and that, should he choose to come to England, he would always be welcome to share her home. At the time it was made, the old man put this offer aside with thanks; he was in the first access of his grief just then, and a daily visit to the little cemetery outside the town seemed to him indispensable; but in the course of a couple of months, when he found that what was left of the old association had no longer any charm for him, and that he was pining for his niece's society, he wrote to Grace, and receiving in return pressing invitation, he broke up his establishment, sold his furniture, gave Lisbeth a handsome donation, and with his beloved books and pipes started for England.

When Grace Middleham decided upon establishing herself in London, it was with no idea of recommencing the life which she had led, or of endeavouring to renew the acquaintanceship which she had formed during her first and only season there. The glamour of "society," if it had ever existed—and it must be allowed that, for a young, pretty, and wealthy girl, impressionable and much sought after, she had been very little fascinated by it—had entirely died away. She had fully made up her mind that the home which she was about to make for herself should be one in the true

sense of the word. Her lines would, she hoped, be cast in pleasant places; but not in any of those which Mrs. Crutchley, the members of the Waddledot family, or their friends, were likely to frequent. In this view, Grace had purchased a residence in the neutral ground lying between Kensington and Bayswater, which has, as yet, not fallen into the hands of any enterprising builder, and which, dotted here and there with a few well-built, costly villas, yet contains within itself a sufficiency of open garden-ground to allow a man, of even small imaginative powers, to forget that he is within four miles of the roar and bustle of the Strand. In making this selection, Grace was influenced by the fact, not merely that she would be beyond the sight and sound of those with whom she had formerly lived, and whose habits, occupations, and subjects of discourse would now have been inexpressibly wearying and distasteful to her, but that she should be enabled to enjoy a certain amount of fresh air, to which she had grown accustomed, and a more than certain amount of independence, which had become a necessity to her. For, while abjuring the balls and set dinners, the daily park and promenade, and all the set and not-to-be-pretermitted duties which fashion prescribes, Grace had no idea of lapsing into solitude, or of denying herself a great deal of enjoyment in her own way. During her short régime at Eaton-place she had made the acquaintance of several men distinguished in letters and art, who combined a love for their profession with a taste for society. Is it that the Bohemian life immortalised in the *Newcomes* no longer exists? or that, having slipped out of it with the progress of years, one is apt to imagine of it, as of all other things, that they must have perished of inanition when we deserted them? Doubtless, thoroughly happy days are still spent at Rosherville, and rockets shoot up before the eyes of admiring thousands at Cremorne, though it seems impossible to believe it. Very probably the successors of Dick Tinto and John James Ridley are still unshorn and unkempt, giving to the wearing of velvet coats, the smoking of brier-root pipes, the drinking of pots of beer, the frequenting of some new "haunts," where the floor is still sanded, the conversation still bristling with allusions to Brown's three-voler, which was "slated;" Jones's farce, which was "goosed;" or Robinson's picture, which was "rejected" at Burlington House. But



the original Richard and J. J. of early days know this kind of life no longer; they wear elegant clothes and trim beards, and wash themselves regularly; they inhabit lovely villas in Camden Hill or St. John's Wood, and have handsome studios in squares which are anything but Fitzroy; while their names are to be found in the newspapers at the fag-end of the list of fashionables at a duchess's reception, and their talk is of Shakespeare and the musical-glasses.

A young lady with ample means has no difficulty, in London, in suiting herself with such society as she chooses, and when Grace had once settled down, with her uncle for her companion, it was an easy matter to renew the acquaintance of her literary and artistic friends of former days, and through them the circle rapidly spread. "Talented people," as they are called by the gentilities, who are accustomed to regard them with a half-envious, half-patronising feeling, are by no means averse to the charms of good living, of which they are the more appreciative, as the viands and wines on which the said gentilities usually regale their lions are generally but moderate in quality. Miss Middleham's table was plentifully supplied, and with the best of everything; and there was a pleasant Bohemianism about the establishment—the Bohemianism of cleanliness and respectability, as distinguished from that of dirt and indecorum—a liberty which never slipped into licence, an immunity from conventional rule which was never permitted to become too lax or too revolutionary, and which harmonised entirely with the tastes of the visitors. To the "Hermitage"—for such was, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, the name of the villa—came men celebrated in all the various walks of literature and art. Travellers and men of science, rarely looked upon by ordinary mortals save at the gatherings of the Geographical or Royal Societies, were found strolling about Miss Middleham's pretty grounds, or chatting in her pretty rooms, brought thither by their highly-esteemed fellow labourer Professor Sturm, with whose writings they were familiar, with whom they had long corresponded, and whom they were only too pleased to meet in the flesh. Dr. Grumph, who had been so many times lost in the interior of Africa, and whose prolonged absences from his home at Islington were reported to be caused by the terror excited in his scientific bosom by Mrs. Grumph, a Scotch

lady of weird aspect and acrid tongue; Major Shotover, the ex-dragoon, who had several times nearly discovered the source of the Niger, who, it was whispered, had for months habitually lived on steaks cut from the living animal, which found itself none the worse for the operation, and whose ordinary Eastern travelling costume was stated to be a lump of grease placed on the top of his head, and nothing more; Stratum, the great geologist, who, being on one occasion benighted and befogged, and without the slightest definite notion as to his whereabouts, happily thought of the expedient of grubbing-up, and placing in his mouth a portion of the earth's crust, and immediately, by its taste, recognised that he was at Isleworth! These and other eminent lights of science, for the most part snuffy old gentlemen in ill-fitting clothes, came to the Hermitage, at the invitation of the professor, and were warmly welcomed by its mistress. Thither, also, came Glaucus Murray, bright and handsome as an ancient Greek, with his classical profile and his curling perfumed locks, charming equally men and women by the delicacy of his compliments and the enforced attention which he paid to all; and with him, of course, came his never-failing companion, Odin Furstenwald, a thorough Englishman, despite his Northern names—a hearty giant, rough as Esau's hands, but loving his art, and holding a good position in it. Came also Scumble, R.A., whom his friends delighted to call the modern Hogarth, an appellation with which he was himself not dissatisfied; and the great Wogg, who, from constantly painting Charles the Second, had become something like him, especially as regards his complexion; and occasionally, but not often, Tom Dalton, greatest of them all, who painted portraits like Gainsborough and landscapes like Constable, who was too highly placed and too magnanimous to know what envy or jealousy meant, and who walked in and out among the crowd like a great Newfoundland dog, with a kind word or an encouraging smile for the smallest of the craft.

It was at Miss Middleham's, too, that Scratchley, the great social caricaturist, not merely received suggestions for the famous woodblocks which made the fortune of Mr. Jollett's comic periodical, but covertly made many capital sketches of the persons figuring therein. Nor was literature without its representatives. Besides Mr. Jollett, who there had ample opportunity of practising that art of hand-

shaking which, alone, had raised him to eminence in his profession, a frequent attendant was young Mr. O'Rourke, whose delightful novels of Irish life were just then beginning to attract attention to their author. The outside world was astonished to find that Mr. O'Rourke was an extremely dull young man, who, however well he might write, distantly imitated his famous countryman in talking "like poor Poll." Nor were they less astonished on having pointed out to them the writer of those trenchant attacks on society in the *Scarifier*, which were popularly attributed to a well-known caustic wit, but were really the work of a consumptive curate in Shoreditch.

These, and other people of the same kind, composed the society at the Hermitage, and acknowledged Grace as their queen, or rather as the female president of their republic; and her life, on the whole, was tolerably happy. One great source of her delight was, that she had been able to provide for her uncle an existence far more enjoyable than any he had previously known. With the British Museum at his command in the morning, the Royal Institution in the afternoon, and either a nebulous discussion with brother philosophers in his own rooms, or a part in the general conversation with Grace's guests in the evening, the professor was in a perfect paradise. As for herself, Grace had her own time at her disposal, and managed to employ it very pleasantly. Although she had become the occupant of an hermitage and had renounced fashionable society, Grace Middleham had no intention of giving up the world; she had her carriages and horses, got through a good deal of visiting, and daily took long rides through the lonely London suburbs, so little known to most dwellers in the metropolis. Very rarely she came across any of those whom she had known during her tenure of the house in Eaton-place; and though all such were anxious for a renewal of the acquaintance, knowing, as they thoroughly well did, that Grace's state was still unchanged, she, while perfectly polite, managed to decline the proffered honour.

It must not be imagined that, pleasant and interesting as her life then was, Grace Middleham had forgotten her early days, or the friend who had so faithfully shared her childish joys and sorrows. The one bitter drop in her cup of happiness was her remembrance of Anne Studley, the singular circumstances which had es-

tranged them, and the mysterious manner in which Anne had disappeared. Often and often during the long watches of the night Grace lay awake, wondering what had been the fate of that strange girl, who had given up all that constituted the pleasures of existence to rescue her friend from what she conceived to be an impending doom. That Anne had emigrated to America with the German family, Grace never believed for an instant; that, according to the statement in Anne's letter, had been a story confessedly concocted for the purpose of satisfying any affectionate scruples which poor Madame Sturm might have felt at Anne's departure, and it had accomplished its object. The sad refrain of that letter, "alone in the world," haunted Grace Middleham with terrible iteration. She herself was solitary in the sense that she had no friend to share her confidences—no one dearer than a friend whom she could look to for love and protection. Her wealth had not brought her these blessings, but, at all events, it had surrounded her with comforts, and, so to speak, with happiness; while Anne, delicate, sensitive, "alone in the world," must combat with that world unaided and uncountenanced, and must be dependent on her own exertions for her daily bread. Quietly, and without letting any one know what she was doing, Grace had made such inquiries after her friend as seemed to her desirable. So far as was consistent with safety, she had taken into her confidence some members of the detective police, and of the members of that ex-official body who devote themselves to the solution of mysteries. On several occasions she had inserted in the *Times* an advertisement commencing with the old catchword "Tocsin," and calling upon A. S. to communicate with her friend at an address then indicated, but without avail. After the non-successes of these last attempts, Grace's heart grew sore indeed, for she thought that, if Anne had seen them, she would have understood them to convey the assurance that her devotion and self-sacrifice were now appreciated in their integrity, and that she would have found herself at liberty to respond to the appeal, the wounded pride would have been healed, the spirit of independence which could brook no acceptance of favours without making some return for them would, Grace thought, have been pacified by these words; and when she found that her advertisement was without response, she was forced to the sad conclusion that

Anne Studley was beyond her reach, and that the chances were that she would never look upon her old friend's face again.

One summer afternoon Grace took it into her head that she should like to drive over to Hampstead, and look at the scenes where her school-days had been passed. She had been thinking of Anne a good deal that morning, and her impulse prompted her, as far as possible, to renew the old association. Chapone House, under its original title, existed no longer; it had become the North-Western University for ladies, where diplomas were granted, and degrees conferred, under the auspices of learned professors. The worthy old ladies who had so long presided over it, in its earlier and humbler days, had retired upon their savings, eked out by a subscription from their former pupils, to which Grace had liberally contributed. But although the old-fashioned red-brick house had been changed into a stuccoed building, the grounds and the neighbourhood were scarcely altered, and, descending from her carriage, Grace easily found the spot where she and Anne had been seated, on that momentous evening when Mr. Heath arrived with the tidings of her uncle's murder. What had they not all gone through since then? The memory of that time seemed more of a dream than a reality, and occupied Grace's attention the whole way home; and she was still brooding over the subject, when a sudden swerving of the carriage and a loud cry called her to herself.

"What is it?" she cried to the footman, who was rapidly descending from the box.

"Nothing, mum," said the man; "at least not much, I think—only an accident. A person who tried to cross just in front of the horses has been knocked down. Not Thomas's fault, mum, I can assure you."

"Let me out," said Grace, quickly. "I will see what it is for myself."

An old man was being propped up by two of the bystanders, who had just withdrawn him from the horses' feet. Shabbily dressed, pinched and poverty stricken, his pallid face marked here and there with blotches, his eyes were closed and he was insensible, the blood trickling from a wound in his forehead.

"Is he much hurt?" asked Grace, bending over the prostrate figure.

"Can't say, mum," said the person against whose knee the old man was reclining; "no bones broke, I should say; but he seems to have had an awkward one on the head."

"Run right between the horses' legs, mum," said the coachman, bending forward from his box, and touching his hat. "Just as I was bringing 'em round through the gates I see this party, and I halloed to him, but he didn't take no notice, and give a kind of stagger, and it was a mercy we wasn't over him, wheels and all."

"Let him be taken indoors instantly; carry him into my morning-room, and lay him on the sofa."

"Wouldn't it be better, mum," said the butler, who had by this time joined the group, "if the sofa was brought into the hall, the party being bleeding profuse, and likely to make the furniture in a mucky state?"

"Better let me and my mate take him to the 'orspittle," said a man in the crowd, immediately scenting a job. "We have got a barrow here which we could lay him on, or, if that was considered too open, we might run him down to St. George's in a cab."

"The poor man is not in a condition to be moved," said Grace; "let him be carried indoors at once."

A mattress was fetched from the house, and the sufferer, being laid upon it, was carried indoors by the two men who had first attended to him. The butler, still active in the interest of the furniture, directed them to deposit their burden in the hall. The old man continued silent and senseless; he opened his eyes once and looked vacantly round, but closed them again immediately.

"Excuse me saying that you had better have the party taken to the 'orspittle," said the butler; "it is close upon seven o'clock, the ladies and gentlemen will be coming to dinner, and to see him laying in the hall in this way is, to say the least of it, arbitrary."

"The man cannot be moved, Jennings," said Grace, shortly; "let him remain where he is."

"Then, mum, hadn't James better run for a doctor. Mr. Pettigrew is on the terrace, close at hand."

"There is no occasion for that; Mr. Burton is coming to dinner, and will be here immediately: he is always punctual. You and James lift this mattress into my morning-room out of the bustle and confusion of the hall."

This had scarcely been done when a Hansom-cab drove up, from which Mr. Burton alighted. He was a tall, good-looking young man, with curling chestnut hair and breezy whiskers, and clear blue eyes. The expression of his face was at

once honest and clever, and there was a good deal of firmness in the mouth. Firmness and unflinching zeal had been the making of him, for without them he might have been a poor country apothecary, instead of being regarded as one of the most rising of London surgeons. The only child of a widowed mother, with but a small pittance, he came up to town to walk the hospitals with a determination of succeeding in the profession which had been his dying father's wish he should pursue. Charles Burton's own tastes lay rather in the legal direction. When a boy he had taken every opportunity of attending the assizes in the county town in which they lived, and had been captivated by, and envious of, the eloquence of the forensic leaders; but his father's wish was to him law, and he accepted the "Middlesex" as his fate. Soon he got interested in his work, and interest begat liking; his intellect had always been clear and sound, and by the aid of high courage and singular manual dexterity, though not yet thirty years of age, he had made his name. Professor Sturm, too, took great interest in physiology, had made Mr. Burton's acquaintance at the house of a professional friend, and had been much struck by the young man's cleverness and modesty. Mr. Burton made an equally favourable impression on Grace, to whom he was soon introduced, and at the time of the occurrence of this accident, he was a frequent visitor at the Hermitage.

"I am so glad to see you, Mr. Burton," said Grace, advancing with extended hand; "we have had an accident—an unfortunate man has been knocked down by my carriage horses, and although the wheels did not pass over him, I fear he may be seriously hurt. I have had him carried into the little room there, and shall be much obliged if you will examine him and give me your opinion upon him."

Mr. Burton entered the room and closed the door carefully behind him. In the course of ten minutes he came out, looking somewhat grave.

"I was right," said Grace, who had been anxiously expecting him; "the poor man is seriously injured?"

"It is impossible to say how seriously at present, from such a cursory examination," said Mr. Burton, "but undoubtedly he is in a bad way; not so much from the actual effects of this accident, but that he

has evidently been a free liver; his blood is in a bad state from drink, and there is every danger of erysipelas setting in. My advice is that he should be at once moved to the hospital."

"I trust that you will not think that necessary," said Grace, quickly. "I feel that the responsibility of the accident rests upon me. It was my carriage by which the mischief was done; and it is my wish that he should remain in this house, and be cared for and tended at my expense."

"I would give way to you, my dear Miss Middleham, if I had nothing further to urge," said Mr. Burton; "but for the man's own sake, I think it necessary that he should be taken to St. Vitus's. There the means and appliances of cure, or, at least, of relief, are better than they can be at any private house; and, as his is a case which requires a constant and skilful nursing, be persuaded by me. If you will order round your carriage, the professor and I will take him to the hospital, and leave him in charge of the house-surgeon, who is an old friend of mine, and who will take every care of him."

"And you will come back and tell us the result of your mission?" said Grace.

"Certainly, if you wish it," said Mr. Burton; "though, I fear, I shall have no very cheering report to bring."

Two hours afterwards Mr. Burton returned. He said that the further examination of the patient confirmed his first impression; he had received some internal injuries which were considered to be of a serious character, and the setting in of erysipelas was greatly feared.

"Poor creature!" said Grace, "I cannot help feeling myself responsible for anything that may happen to him. Is any thing known of him? where he comes from? who he is?"

"Yes," said Mr. Burton, "he came to himself for about ten minutes, and Channell, the house-surgeon, spoke to him. He could not make out where he was, nor did he know how the accident occurred, but he seems an educated kind of man, and he said that his name was Studley."

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